



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good afternoon.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the inaugural meeting of the Travel Industry Association's (TIA) Policy Council, which took place March 12-13 in Washington, D.C. The Policy Council was created to shape and prioritize TIA's growing public affairs activities. The Council also helps the association become a more vibrant and powerful advocacy organization that can better represent the travel industry.

Council members met about three key issues: inbound international strategies, domestic travel facilitation and the impact of climate change on the travel industry. Experts delivered presentations on these issues that stimulated follow-up discussions by the group on what TIA's role should be on behalf of the industry. Many recommendations were made by the council which will soon be presented to the TIA board for further discussion. I will keep everyone informed on the progress of these issues as I know how critical these are to our industry.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

SAVE the DATE: ATU Workshop – How to Work with Tour Operators and Travel Agents

AOT is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop **How to Work with Tour Operators and Travel Agents**.

Have you thought about working with tour operators, but you don't know where to start? Perhaps you've considered it, but don't think it fits in your budget. Attend the next ATU Workshop and "Learn How to Work with Tour Operators and Travel Agents." In addition to covering the domestic market, we'll discuss the international markets AOT targets and which ones make sense for you. Learn no-cost and low-cost ways to reach out to the travel trade without breaking the bank. Find out what a receptive operator is and how to work with them. Hear about changes in the travel trade that will affect how you do business in the future, such as consolidation, dynamic packaging and experience-based tours.

Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or mdorn@azot.gov.

How to Work with Tour Operators and Travel Agents will be held in the following locations:

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Best Western Arroyo Roble Hotel & Creekside Villas
400 N Highway 89A
Sedona, AZ, 86336

Thursday, April 3, 2008

1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Holiday Inn Express Sierra Vista
1902 S. HWY 92
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Hosts Spring Training Fam Tour

The Arizona Office of Tourism recently hosted a Spring Training Media Familiarization Tour for three Japanese journalists. The journalists attended four spring training games from all around the Valley, including Phoenix, Mesa, Peoria, and Scottsdale. They met key Japanese players and coaches. The group also explored many of the Valley's other unique treasures including the Desert Botanical Gardens, Heard Museum, and the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. A hot air balloon ride and a jeep tour allowed the writers to discover the Sonoran Desert in an unforgettable way. Together, these writers represented a readership of 2,354,495. For more information, contact Erica Rich at erich@azot.gov or 602-364-3698.

AOT to Implement an On-line Training Program for Travel Agents

The Arizona Office of Tourism is pleased to inform you that we are in the process of developing an Arizona online certification program for travel agents. We will be working with Recommend, a travel trade publication to develop, promote and conduct this campaign. Recommend reaches more than 48,000 agents in the US and Canada and they currently have more than 13,000 active

members. DMOs who are interested in being a part of this program should contact Kristy Swanson at kswanson@azot.gov or 602-364-3696 for additional information.

Reach the Mexican Market at the 2nd Annual Arizona Road Show

AOT will target Mexican tour operators and travel agents at the 2nd Annual Arizona Road Show to be held in Mexico City and Guadalajara from May 5-9, 2008. The Road Show will highlight destination seminars for travel agents in Mexico City and Guadalajara, tour operator sales calls in Mexico City and a tour operator dinner in Guadalajara. Registration cost is \$1,995 per delegate and includes two nights accommodation in Mexico City and two nights accommodation in Guadalajara. For more information please contact Loretta Belonio at lbelonio@azot.gov or 602-364-3725.

AOT Hosts 9th Annual Sales Mission in Las Vegas

The Arizona Office of Tourism along with other western states will be hosting the 9th Annual sales mission to meet with Japanese receptive operators in the Las Vegas area. These Las Vegas-based operators are important as they make and influence decisions for the tour companies they work for in Japan. The sales mission will take place on Saturday, April 19th and will be followed by a Golf Tournament. Participation costs are \$300 per supplier and \$350 per DMO. For more information please contact Osamu Hoshino at ohoshino@comcast.net or 801-266-3345.

Reach the Mexican Market at ARLAG

Each year the Airline Representatives Association of Guadalajara (ARLAG) coordinates a trade show for Mexican travel agents and travel suppliers. This well organized event is interesting because it not only attracts travel agents from Guadalajara and neighboring cities, but also travel agents from throughout Mexico. ARLAG will be held May 16, 2008 and brochure distribution will be available through the Arizona Office of Tourism at a cost of \$200, plus shipping. Space is limited to four companies. Please contact Kristy Swanson for more information, kswanson@azot.gov or 602-364-3696.

Industry News

Survey: \$10 Billion in Federal Tax Rebates will be Spent on Travel

Ten percent of Americans said they plan on using their federal tax rebate to travel, according to a survey commissioned by travel insurance vendor Access America. As part of the government's economic stimulus plan, taxpayers can expect a 2008 federal rebate of a minimum of \$300 for individuals (\$600 for couples) up to a maximum of \$600 for individuals (\$1,200 for couples), plus \$300 per child. "With a stimulus package valued at about \$105 billion, the survey results suggest that more than \$10 billion could be directed into travel and tourism as early as this summer," said Mark Cipolletti, vice president for Access America. It was not immediately clear whether that \$10 billion was money taxpayers were already planning to spend on travel or whether it was additional travel dollars the industry could expect to gain. The survey was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs between March 3 and 6. (www.TravelWeekly.com)

Record Number of U.S. Tourists

The number of foreign visitors to the U.S. set a record in 2007 for the first time since before the 9-11 attacks, according to the U.S. Commerce Department. Foreign visitor numbers totaled 56.7 million, surpassing the previous record of 51.2 million set in 2000, said U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez. He added: "At a time when our economy is sluggish in other parts, such as the housing market, it's great to have a bright spot like tourism that is adding growth and energy and employment to our economy." Foreign visitors also spent a record \$122.7 billion in the United

States last year, a rise of more than 50 percent from a low set in 2003 in the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, according to Mr. Gutierrez. A sharp drop in the dollar compared to many foreign currencies has made the U.S. a more attractive tourist destination, but most of the increase was among visitors from North American neighbors Canada and Mexico. "America is the world travel bargain, and yet 2 million fewer (overseas) travelers visited the United States in 2007 than in 2000," Roger Dow, president of the Travel Industry Association, said in a statement. The group has been lobbying for legislation that would impose a fee on foreign visitors to pay for a program to promote tourism in the U.S., similar to ones conducted by many other countries. The Bush administration does not believe that is a job for government, but is working to make it easier for foreign travelers to obtain visas and move more quickly through customs when they arrive, said Mr. Gutierrez. The 56.7 million foreigners who visited the US last year included 17.7 million from Canada, 15.1 million from Mexico and 23.9 million from overseas countries. Visitor numbers from Italy, Spain, Ireland, Sweden, China, South Korea and Australia all set records in 2007, while tourism from Germany, France, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Central America and the Middle East showed strong growth. (*Report by David Wilkening, Travel Mole e-Newsletter*).

Study: Web Sites a More Important Source of News than Traditional Media

A new WeMedia/Zogby Interactive poll shows that 67 percent of Americans believe traditional journalism is out of touch with what Americans want from their news. In addition, says the Center for Media Research, the survey found that while almost 70 percent of Americans think journalism is important to the quality of life in their communities, though two thirds are not satisfied with the quality of journalism in their communities. The online survey documented the shift away from traditional sources of news, such as newspapers and TV, to the Internet, most dramatically among so-called digital natives, people under 30 years old.

- 48 percent of the survey respondents said their primary source of news and information is the Internet, an increase from the 40 percent who said the same a year ago. Younger adults were most likely to name the Internet as their top source
- 55 percent of those age 18 to 29 say they get most of their news and information online, compared to 35 percent of those age 65 and older
- 38 percent of these seniors said they get most of their news from television.
- Overall, 29 percent said television is their main source of news, while 11 percent turn to radio and 10 percent to newspapers for most of their news and information
- 7 percent of those age 18 to 29 said they get most of their news from newspapers
- 17 percent of those age 65 and older list newspapers as their top source of news and information

According to the study, Web sites are regarded as a more important source of news and information than traditional media outlets:

- 86 percent of Americans said Web sites were an important source of news, with more than half (56 percent) who view these sites as "very important." 77 percent view television, 74 percent radio, and 70 percent newspapers as "important" sources of news
- 38 percent say the same about blogs